



# GROUNDCOVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

August 2013 VOLUME 4 ISSUE 8

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## INSIDE

Expungement	— p. 2
Secret government	— p. 2
A choice	— p. 3
Calendar	— p. 3
Engagement	— p. 4
Gym time	— p. 5
Poetry	— p. 5
Storefront art	— p. 6
Tony's tales	— p. 7
Puzzles	— p. 8
Pizza in the Park	— p. 10
MISSION	— p. 11
Food	— p. 12

## Buskers — p. 10





## Community Engagement – a different approach to public safety

by Susan Beckett

Community Engagement is one leg of the tripod of services in the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office. Done well, it reduces the strain on the other legs – police and jail services – and changes the trajectory of teens growing up in difficult circumstances.

Youth initiatives fall into the Community Engagement bailiwick and was one of Sheriff Jerry Clayton's Ten Points of Change, the platform on which he ran for office and a blueprint he has followed in making changes. The program got a huge boost when Natalia Harris came aboard, first as an intern completing her Bachelors of Social Work (BSW), and now as an employee, following the birth of her third child.

Harris explained what keeps her coming back. "I get to see kids on a regular basis and I get to see the impact of these programs... How residents feel having the support of an agency as big as the Sheriff's Office when they are having an issue. Knowing that people have access," she said.

According to Harris, communities can present a lot like people do and will respond to an appropriate treatment plan. Walk through a neighborhood in which break-ins are common and you will find it looks depressed, gray. There are no kids playing in the streets, doors are closed and the windows shuttered. Medicine for the immediate problem – break-ins – is police enforcement. Working with residents to identify the causes and remedies underlying the break-ins, and then working to change those conditions, restores ongoing health in the community.

The Street Outreach Team, composed largely of people who survived the criminal justice system themselves, helps others in trouble navigate the legal system. They have contacts in the community they use to connect people in trouble with the resources they need to take care of themselves while keeping the community safe. They offer advice on how to survive, and even thrive, in prison, pointing out the pitfalls and opportunities. This federally-funded program also works with incarcerated people who self-identify as wanting assistance.

Other programs address community health by promoting positive behaviors and increased opportunity. Harris has a natural affinity for these, having come from difficult circumstances herself, even surviving a brief stint of homelessness. She knows how alone a



Natalia Harris leads a group known as Young Women Making Washtenaw County Better. The group is part of Sheriff Jerry Clayton's "Ten Points of Change."

teen can be, unfairly burdened by adult responsibilities and without someone looking out for their future. For the last year, Harris has facilitated a group of young women called Young Women Making Washtenaw County Better (YWMWB) that finds mentors for themselves and become mentors to others.

Programs like YWMWB do more than rehabilitate people who have strayed into lawlessness; they accomplish it with community service that results in a more nurturing environment. Young women looking to make a positive difference in their neighborhoods are joined by young women who choose to join the group as a diversion option when they are in trouble with the law. Together, they meet, support each other and volunteer, all under the supervision of Harris.

The genesis of the group was Sheriff Clayton charging Harris with finding seven girls from Ypsilanti to attend the Alpha Kappa Alpha scholarship fashion show. The five girls who actually attended discovered they like hanging out together and decided to take on a community service project together that they could note on their college applications. Three of the girls – Kelley Greene, Asia Yarbough, and Princess Logan – took the initiative to form the group and along the way discovered they really did want to help out and make a difference.

"One thing that impacted me," said Logan, "was when we had a mentor luncheon and the mentors shared how they struggled. Some of them are still struggling. Everybody struggles. It's a wonderful feeling giving back to the community. We went to Hope Clinic Soup Kitchen. We went to different low-income neighborhoods in

Washtenaw County and passed out toys and food. It was fun – and cold!"

Greene, another of the group's founders, felt the impact when they gave out food and toys on Christmas day and one woman came out of her house and gave the girls a big hug.

"It gave me the warm and fuzzies inside," Greene confided.

Ehmonie is one of the girls referred to the group through juvenile court. The girls are supposed to be between the ages of 15 and 20 but they made an exception for Ehmonie, who was only 13.

"At first I thought it was going to be a bunch of snotty girls and I came reluctantly. But now I really like it and I like giving back to my community. We went to a courtroom and I asked them to help get our name out there so they could contact us if they needed help. I was on probation for violence, but I've worked past that. I've learned to be open, loyal, not shy – to be myself," said Ehmonie.

"We see the growth in them all the time," said Greene. "There

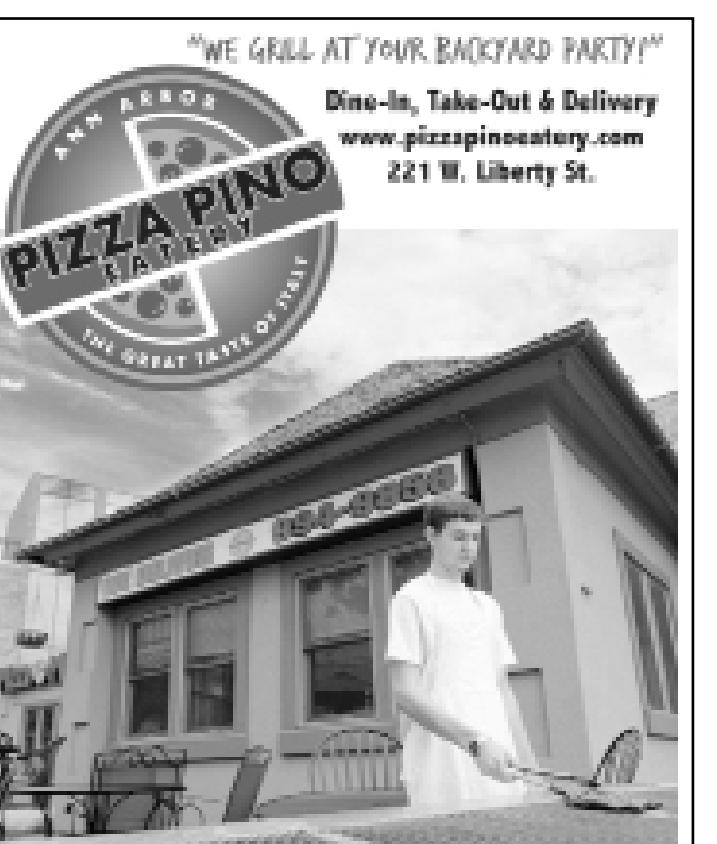
were some girls who were close to getting kicked out of school, and now they love going to school. One of the criteria for being in the group is you have to *want* to be in school, 'cause not only are you putting our name out there, you're representing yourself.

"There was one girl who had a lot of power – she could make people do whatever she wanted, and now she doesn't do that anymore. She loves school and is getting ready to take on a leadership position in our group."

Greene went on to say that being willing to participate and be engaged with the group was another of the requirements for membership. Other criteria are that you must reside or attend school in Washtenaw County, have a desire for any form of higher education, and regularly attend scheduled group meetings.

Another group member, Sade, is 17 and was introduced to the group when her friend Kelley Greene brought her to the Ballin' in the Willow three-on-three basketball game. There she met Harris and decided she wanted to meet more people, especially women. She was also interested in developing community service skills.

see COMMUNITY, page 9



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## Decisions toward wellbeing: maximizing your gym experience

by Matt K.  
Groundcover Vendor

There are times in life when we make decisions that seriously impact our futures. Some examples are getting married or divorced, buying a new car, attending college, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. These decisions truly shape our lives, and it is important to set standards for making smart choices. Life comes with many opportunities – raising a family, working, going to school, planning for college, traveling, maintaining a healthy relationship – and it is crucial that our daily decisions have a positive influence on our lifestyle.

Exercise is one pivot point through which we can proactively shape our lives. Joining a gym is a great first step, because gyms are typically located near neighborhoods and offer a variety of equipment and training at a reasonable monthly or annual fee. It is important to pick a convenient location, especially if we find ourselves so busy that we only have time for short workouts a few times per week.

Commitment is also important in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. How



can we make it easier to commit to

exercising regularly? One tip is to keep workouts interesting and fun. Gyms offer various workouts to choose from, such as weight training, free weights, aerobics, swimming, and dance classes. Keep exercise fresh by trying something new!

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## Life Choices

by Ashley M. Poe  
Groundcover Contributor

Brought up in a tense place  
trying to find the right path  
Strayed too far from my mama's doors  
found myself in the streets of  
Drugs and Addiction  
Only rule, don't mess with the police  
The streets were addicting  
so I stayed  
Drugs, Parties, Stealing, Fighting, Sex, and Money  
was the easy way  
Feeling like a fool now  
locked down on counts I can't even recognize  
Man, I didn't do that sh\*\*  
But what's my word against theirs  
Got caught up in the game  
looking for fame  
trying to work through life's struggles  
Alone with nowhere to go  
I need to get myself together and Recover  
and let the true definition of strength within me  
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**greg@groundcovernews.com**

classes that match our exercise goals. For example, if we want to build muscle, we might choose free weights.

If we can afford it, personal training is an effective way to personalize our exercise. With the help of a professional trainer, we can become educated about our bodies and how to maximize our workouts. Trainers may also offer personalized advice about how nutritional and lifestyle changes can improve our health. We notice how adjustments in our diet and exercise routine affect our bodies. We establish a relationship with ourselves where we notice a change in our bodies that results from taking action based on our commitments – we notice the perceived effort and also its result: how we feel with our new habits. No matter our abilities, a personal trainer can work with us to help us reach our goals.

Our daily decisions truly shape our destiny, and choosing to exercise can lead to a healthier, happier life. To keep workouts fresh, fun, and informed, consider looking into joining a local gym.

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## Hand-painted artwork adds personality, history to Ann Arbor storefronts

by Nora Weber  
Groundcover Contributor

As computers became an essential tool for many artists, John Copley chose to keep technology separate from his trade.

"I find computers difficult to use as a creative tool," said Copley. The artist, whose name is well-known among Ann Arbor business owners, found that the efficiency of modern technology often came at the cost of "perfecting" aspects of the creative process which make his artwork personal.

Copley's commitment to maintaining the character of his art can be appreciated throughout Ann Arbor, where the front windows of various Ann Arbor businesses feature his hand-painted designs.

### A Personal Touch

One such example of Copley's artwork can be seen at Arcadian Antiques, a long-time resident of Nickels Arcade that specializes in a variety of antiques, including jewelry, china, and rare items. Highlighting the store's location is the image of a stout, pink pig, painted on both a hanging wooden sign above the door, and as the glass entryway. When owner Rhonda Gilpin reached out to John Copley 20 years ago about designing the door, she hoped to incorporate pigs, which are representative of her business's origins and a traditional German symbol for good luck.

"I used to drive and do a lot of antiquing on the road," Gilpin recalled, "and so I would go to a lot of rural places where there were farm animals. After a day of driving, I would pack a lunch and my kids and I would sit on the roadside somewhere by a farm and just enjoy what was left of the day."

Although adopting the pig as the symbol of Arcadian Antiques was far from Gilpin's original plan, her idea and John Copley's design became integral in representing her shop.

"When I started the business, we had little pink planters made, and I put



Arcadian Antiques sign was made by artist John Copley. Other examples of his work can be found at other area businesses.

flowers in them. We focused loosely. Now we even have pigs on our bags."

Tucked between Maynard and State Streets, Nickel's Arcade is somewhat hidden from the main thoroughfare, but curiosity about the charming pig sign attracts passersby, and Gilpin said she receives frequent comments and questions about the design and her reason for choosing it.

### History in the Details

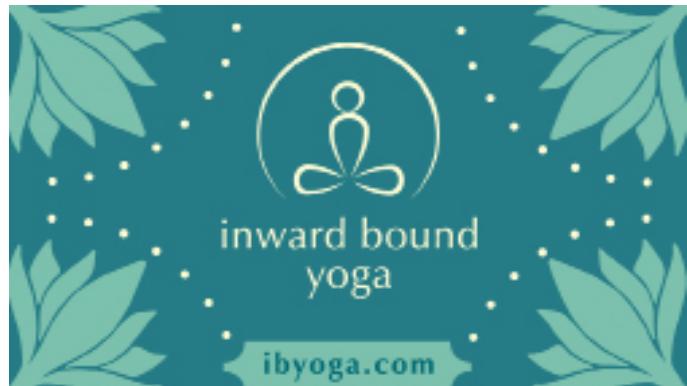
A few blocks away, West Side Book Shop has also featured Copley's designs for more than two decades. Located on West Liberty Street, the main window is livened by a golden border, the shape of which mirrors the building's exterior. "I'm a big believer in making sure that the sign fits the business and the neighborhood," Copley said. "I like to consider the architecture and find a way to incorporate that into the design."

Jay Platt, owner of West Side Book Shop, noted the harmony between the storefront and the architecture of the building, which has been a home to literature for more than a century.

"This building was constructed

in 1888, and was actually a bookshop early on," Platt shared. "This part of town was mostly German, and it was a German bookstore."

The original storefront art, which read "John Haarer, Book Merchant" (in German), has long since been replaced, but the current design by Platt and Copley indicates the building's long history in the business. West Side Book Shop specializes in rare and used books, collected from across the nation, and includes a selection on Antarctica and polar exploration – a personal interest of Platt's. In representing the shop, the hanging sign was painted to look like an open book, with the name painted in smaller letters above a largely scripted "Books."



## Tony's tales from Liberty and Main

by Tony S.  
Groundcover Vendor

*Tony has been with Groundcover since our start and his prowess as a salesperson is largely responsible for getting Groundcover off the ground. In the years since, he has had a variety of housing situations, often camping in the woods between stays in more conventional housing. He was recently away and took time to chronicle some of the highlights of his life over the last few years.*

### The Gift

I sleep in the park near the street; it is where I rest. In the morning, the duck taps me on my foot with his beak, and from the woods, the woodchuck comes to join us for a peanut butter treat. I throw them peanut buttered bread pieces. It makes me feel good to watch them eat. These animals are the true friends of mine. As the saying goes, and I believe it, "They won't bite the hand that feeds them."

Asked if it bothers him to know that his artwork will come down at the end of the season, Copley was quick to respond that it does not.

"I go in knowing that the work will be temporary. It's part of the tradition."

That dedication to tradition, along with a commitment to upholding personality in art, has made John Copley's work a true representation of the history and character of Ann Arbor's local businesses, and something to give a second look next time you're walking around town.

I like to get up early, love to say, "Good morning!" to all.

If it happens that a person is in a bad



Tony S. selling Groundcover News at his regular spot at Liberty and Main Streets.

mood and snaps at me, I just smile back and say, "I will pray for you. Ann Arbor is a happy place to be," and I smile and let it be. That is a gift that is good for your heart.

There are so many gifts on my corner and it's not about money. One day a young boy no more than four years old came by bouncing a plastic ball with his family. As he neared me, the wind took the ball into the street and the boy ran after it. I turned and ran after him, his parents following close behind.

We were in the middle of the street. Everything seemed to go by so slow – the noise of the car hitting its brakes and the voice of the mother screaming.

"No!, No! NO!" It rings in my ears to this day.

I still feel the bumper of the car lightly touching my neck as I grabbed the boy so he wouldn't get hit. I turned to the parents behind me, his mother's eyes flowing with tears, and as I handed over the boy, said to the father, "He is young and wasn't thinking. Give him a hug and tell him you love him."

So I shook his mother's and father's hands and said I was glad that I could be here for them.

I miss those moments when I was ABLE to do that! That's a gift no one can take away and I thank God for putting me there. I walked away with a tear in my eye – a tear of joy.

### Good Samaritans

One day as I stood on my corner selling papers, a man inside Starbucks had his wallet taken from his coat. An employee came running outside, told me what happened and asked if I saw the guy who had just left. I had, and told him that if I saw him again, I'd let him know. An officer came by to make a police report, and as he was taking a statement from the victim inside the cof-

fee shop, the man who stole the wallet stood right in front of me. I went inside to let them know and the officer ran down Main Street, caught the guy, and returned the wallet. Two days later, as the officer passed by in his patrol car, he rolled down the window and thanked me. He told me they let the guy out and two days later arrested him again for robbing a woman at an ATM. I asked him why they let him go, and he turned and said, "That's our judicial system!" Then there was the time I was selling the paper to people as they waited for the light to change. (I watch the light and can time it like a clock. You only have so much time until the light changes to get people to say yes and buy the paper, or they walk on! As the late Sonny Elliot said, you can try but you'll never get 100 percent – no one ever has!) This young lady walked by me talking on her phone and started walking right into traffic! I put out my hand, grabbed her coat and pulled her back. Time moves funny when things like that happen. Before I knew it, she was gone. People from Starbucks came out and thanked me with a very nice drink.

Then there is my angel, Mariel, the eight-year-old girl who lost her life to cancer. She was the strongest person I ever knew. At the funeral, her grandmother told me that Mariel asked if God could take her so that her mother and her father could be at peace. She was strong and true! These are the gifts that God has given. And so many friends – I treasure all the smiles and hugs.

Some days get very cold on my corner. My coldest day was 20 degrees below zero, 38 below with the wind chill. But no matter what is outside, the warm hearts of the people I see each day keep me coming back.



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## Camp Take Notice leads the fight to protect Pizza in the Park

by Greg Hoffman  
Groundcover News Sales Manager

Over the past several months, there has been a growing controversy about the future of the weekly event at Liberty Plaza at the corner of Liberty and Division in Ann Arbor commonly known as "Pizza in the Park." For the last seven years, regardless of the weather or holidays, Vineyard Church has sponsored a free meal of hot pizza to the lower-income community of Ann Arbor at that park. In addition to the pizza, patrons of Pizza in the Park (PITP) often receive food to take home, clothes, shoes, and other much-needed supplies.

In addition to providing the bare necessity of food, PITP also provides patrons with the opportunity for social interaction, both with peers who may be facing similar hardships, and with volunteers and other community members. This display of care, interest, and camaraderie can have an enormously positive effect on those who visit Liberty Plaza on Friday nights, and can have a genuinely therapeutic effect on individuals who may be suffering from depression or other mental illness. Simply stated,



Sheri Wander speaks to City Council about Pizza in the Park.

PITP helps reinforce that there are people out there who care.

After complaints from local businesses about the nature of the crowd at Liberty Plaza, the Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation Department informed Vineyard Church that they would need

to pay \$137 each week to reserve the park, a fee that would have been so cost prohibitive to the church, that it would have prevented PITP from continuing. After an unsuccessful attempt to change venues to the Ann Arbor Community Center, the future of PITP seemed to be in jeopardy. At this point, members of Camp Take Notice decided to take up the cause, and began lobbying the City government to keep PITP alive. They wrote letters to the City Council, and Mayor Hieftje responded by asking the Parks and Recreation Department to exempt Vineyard Church from having to pay the weekly fee.

Despite this victory, the issue is not yet resolved, since there is nothing in writing to protect this spoken arrangement. Camp Take Notice members, along with other volunteers, have been working to influence the Ann Arbor City Council to pass a Humanitarian Aid Ordinance that formally preserves Pizza in the Park, and opens the door for other churches, charities, and other organizations to engage in "random acts of kindness" without being charged a park usage fee. Camp Take Notice members have spoken in front of the City Council on multiple occasions, beseeching the

officials to pass this local law immediately. Your support is needed to help make this idea a reality.

### What you can do to weighing in on the Humanitarian Aid Ordinance:

1. **Write an email to City Council.** Go to [a2gov.org/government/citycouncil](http://a2gov.org/government/citycouncil), then click "email Mayor and Council."
2. **Write a physical letter to the Mayor or Council members.** Address letters to: City of Ann Arbor, ATTN: City Council [or member name; see below], P.O. Box 8647, Ann Arbor, MI 48107.
3. **Call a Council member or the Mayor's office.** Council members are: Marcia Higgins 734-662-0487 Margie Teall 734-476-2777 Chuck Warpehoski 734-972-8304 Mike Anglin 734-741-9786 Sabra Briere 734-995-3518 Sumi Kailaspathy 734-769-5698 Sally Hart Peterson 734-996-5569 Stephen Kunselman 734-975-4604 Chris Taylor 734-834-3600
4. **Volunteer and help spread the word!** If you are interested in volunteering to help pass the Humanitarian Aid Ordinance, please email [rithtoreceivehumanitarianaid@gmail.com](mailto:rithtoreceivehumanitarianaid@gmail.com), or call (734) 660-2140.

## Street performers enrich Ann Arbor's summer culture

by Stacey Balter  
Groundcover Contributor

Visitors are drawn to Ann Arbor for a multitude of reasons, one of the foremost being the thriving local culture. There are great restaurants to sample from, art galleries to be explored, and entertainment to be had on every corner. Buskers, or street performers, are an integral part of that culture.

Eddy Powell, a multi-talented musician and magician, brings enthusiasm, kindness, and a love to please to the streets. Although busking can be quite a lucrative profession – on his best day Eddy made \$85 in one hour, which is 13 times the minimum wage – it's not about the money. "Busking is a two-way street. I can brighten a person's day," says Eddy, as he sits at the corner of Main Street and Liberty, one of his favorite busking spots. According to Eddy, you never know how people are feeling; this is why he strives to bring a little bit of laughter into their lives with a juggling trick, or a smile to their faces with a beloved song.

Despite the positive impact of street performers like Eddy, there remains a stigma against busking.



Ryan from Wilmington, N.C. plays to passersby at Liberty Plaza in Ann Arbor.

"People can go to a club or a concert and pay to listen to music, but when it's on the street, for some reason it is inappropriate," Eddy observes.

This stigma is exemplified by the treatment of street performers during a local event that has become an international mecca for creativity and craftsmanship: the Ann Arbor Art Fair. For four days every mid-July, artists and artisans travel to Ann Arbor from all over the world to explore and to express

many different shades of life. Among them are street performers, hailing from Ireland to Ypsilanti, who flock to this event to share in a love of art.

I was looking forward to interviewing buskers from all over the world about their experiences, and was surprised to find substantially fewer street performers than in previous years. I learned this was because the State Street Art Fair administration instituted a new policy, prohibiting busking in that section. (To my knowledge, the three

see BUSKERS, page 12

officials to pass this local law immediately. Your support is needed to help make this idea a reality.

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## MISSION: building community, searching for land

by Carolyn Lusch and Greg Hoffman  
Groundcover Contributors

Last year, through an excellent effort on the part of The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), Michigan Campaign To End Homelessness, and state and local authorities, 50 residents of Camp Take Notice – a former tent city in Scio Township that was evicted by the Michigan Department of Transportation – were given one-year subsidies for housing in Washtenaw County. Of the remaining camp residents, around 28 did not qualify for subsidies for various reasons. Now, a year later, these subsidies are drawing to a close, and both the residents and the organization that sponsored CTN, MISSION (Michigan Itinerant Shelter System – Interdependent Out of Necessity), are facing challenges and opportunities for the future.

MISSION members are quick to acknowledge the excellent work done by social service agencies in Washtenaw County in attempting to deal with the problem of homelessness. But none of those organizations have adequate resources to meet the enormous need. MISSION estimates that there are 55-65 individuals sleeping around churches per night, in addition to those served by the Delonis Center and those sleeping outside in hidden campsites. The winter rotating shelter, in which various churches take turns hosting those in need of a place to sleep, ends on April 8. After that, people spread out to secret bridges, parks, and private sites, from where they are inevitably evicted. According to Wander, people have to move every night because of harassment and eviction. Many stay with relatives or friends, housing unsafe numbers of people in small spaces. All of this creates an overwhelming sense, in Wander's words, that "there is no place to go."

Despite the physical space for CTN no longer existing, MISSION board members Caleb Poirier and Antonio Benton described all of the incredible ways in which they continue to foster community. They host several weekly events, from the MISSION board meeting, to the CTN dinner and



MISSION board member Peggy Lynch and Camp Take Notice founder Caleb Poirier are working to find a permanent location after last year's eviction.

meeting, to nonviolence trainings and support groups. They build camaraderie through special events such as the Hawaiian Party and Christmas Party, and also take on tasks to contribute to the wider community. AnnArbor.com published an article in November 2012 about MISSION members' volunteer trip to New Jersey to help victims of Hurricane Katrina. More locally, the organization has been active in cleaning up abandoned campsites around bridges and parks, and even has adopted the stretch of road by Zeeb and Wagner near the camp's former location. Former CTN resident Alonzo Young related the story of how, earlier this summer, MISSION members attended his mother's funeral to support him.

Despite the efforts to preserve the community, members of MISSION are adamant that a physical space for Camp Take Notice is necessary. According to MISSION Vice President Greg Pratt, homelessness is not "a pond to be drained," and with the counted homeless population of Washtenaw County having doubled over the last two years, the need for a place for those who can't go anywhere else is more urgent than ever before. CTN not only provided a place to live but "also gave you a neighborhood," as Poirier put it, with community members who worked out problems, supported each other, and functioned democratically. MISSION is searching anxiously and deliberately for the next Camp Take Notice.

*Find out more about MISSION and Camp Take Notice at [www.mission2.org](http://www.mission2.org).*

### Join us at 10 a.m. Sunday!

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### Cryptoquote Solution

Every American wants a clean slate, but nobody wants to lose what they've got.

– Rob Sheffield

## Pasta with Fresh Veggies

by Lisa Sonnenburg  
Groundcover Contributor

1 12-oz package of pasta (rotini, penne or macaroni)  
2 bell peppers, chopped  
2 ripe tomatoes or 1.5 cups cherry tomatoes, chopped  
4 green onions, chopped  
2 cloves of garlic, minced  
½ cup sliced olives (black and/or green)  
½ cup fresh basil, chopped  
2 T olive oil  
1 T red wine vinegar  
½ cup feta cheese  
Salt and pepper to taste



1. Prepare pasta according to package directions.
2. While pasta is cooking, chop peppers, tomatoes, green onions, garlic and basil.
3. Once pasta is cooked, drain and return to pot.
4. Combine pasta with peppers, tomatoes, garlic, olives and basil.
5. Drizzle olive oil and vinegar over pasta and veggies. Add salt and pepper to taste. Toss to combine.
6. Top with feta cheese.
7. Enjoy immediately, or place in refrigerator overnight to chill and have as pasta salad.

This recipe works best with fresh ingredients, is very easy, and can be served warm or chilled as a pasta salad. Or, use half the recipe warm for dinner and chill the other half for a pasta salad for lunch the next day.

*Serves 4.*

## Buskers—Ann Arbor's street performers

continued from page 10

homeless. This was news to me, since street performance has been a part of Ann Arbor culture for as long as I have lived here.

During the Art Fair last year, I sat a block away from Liberty Plaza with another musician friend, and two police officers stopped by to listen to us play guitar. I was treated with nothing but kindness from the community then. I felt what Eddy had told me about – the feeling of giving back through music. I was looking forward to experiencing the same kind of feeling this year, and for visitors to enjoy a unique style of entertainment.

I believe that this culture of compassion

is not lost to Ann Arbor; although the State Street Art Fair staff requested that Eddy leave his usual busking area, the people of Ann Arbor continue to support his music. Despite the tension between buskers and police officers due to this new policy, their mutual respect remains intact. Recently, a couple of officers approached Eddy and asked to take a picture with him.

The community has made it clear that street performers will remain part of the local culture. Whatever the obstacles, those like Eddy will continue to humbly carry out the long, rich tradition of busking every day, with a smile on their faces, and a song for the people.



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